

**House Children & Family Affairs Committee
Amendment No. 2**

Amendment No. 2 to HB1656

**Chumney
Signature of Sponsor**

AMEND Senate Bill No. 1330*

House Bill No. 1656

FILED

Date _____

Time _____

Clerk _____

Comm. Amdt. _____

by adding the following language as a preamble immediately preceding the enacting clause:

WHEREAS, the general assembly recognizes that provision of adequate foster care services to Tennessee children is a matter of the highest priority; and

WHEREAS, the special house task force to study foster care was created to permit an open forum for assessing the strengths and weaknesses of the children's services system in providing foster care; and

WHEREAS, the task force consisted of Representative Page Walley, Chairman, and Representatives Butch Lewis, Beth Halteman-Harwell, Mary Pruitt and Joe Kent; and

WHEREAS, the task force heard testimony and received reports and information from numerous concerned citizens and groups including the Child Welfare League of America, the office of the comptroller of the treasury, the department of children's services, the Tennessee commission on children and youth and the Tennessee Family Institute; now therefore

AND FURTHER AMEND by adding the following sections immediately after the enacting clause:

SECTION __. The general assembly, in the interest of public health, safety and welfare, urges the department of children's services to expeditiously and administratively implement the various recommendations of the Child Welfare League of America which do not require legislative authorization. Those recommendations include:

(1) Full implementation of the department of children's services, including appropriate staff and system consolidation, training and cross-training and provision of adequate office space;

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(2) Development of a three-year plan related to foster care and adoption services, including development of adequate information concerning caseload, workload and staff responsibilities;

(3) Resolution of interagency issues related to access to, and adequacy of, services provided under TennCare for children in state custody, including coordination with affected agencies; and

(4) Review of the roles of the children's services agencies ("CSAs") to ensure sufficient definition and separation from the department's responsibilities, with consideration of charging the CSAs with lead responsibility for non-custodial children and families while DCS retains lead responsibility for children in state custody.

SECTION ___. It is the intent of the general assembly that the department of children's services shall enhance foster care services in the areas of residential treatment, attorney services, adoption services, reunification, case management and staff training to implement, to the full extent of funding appropriated to it, the recommendations of the child welfare league of America.

SECTION ___. The department of children's services shall report to the select committee on children and youth no later than January 15th of each year for the next three (3) years, beginning on January 15, 2000, regarding its implementation of the above recommendations.